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# American Art Journal.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 1866.

HENRY O. WATSON & CO., PUBLISHERS.

PUBLICATION OFFICE, 806 BROADWAY.

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## REBUILDING OF THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

It should hardly be necessary to suggest to the gentlemen who have charge of rebuilding the Academy of Music, that it is imperatively necessary to make it securely fire-proof. In a building exclusively devoted to one purpose, free from conflicting possibilities of danger, with ample means devoted to its erection, a perfect exemption from fire can be had beyond any peradventure. We do not propose to dictate any special plan; the means must necessarily conform to the design; but we desire to impress upon the Directors that they are about to erect a house and not a warehouse; that the goods to be stored there are human beings and not bales of cotton, and that a great responsibility rests upon the results of their labors.

We are of opinion that private individuals have too much license in erecting places of public amusement; using their own judgment, and shaping that according to the interests of their pockets, regardless of the terrible consequences which might result from such a policy. In France, the erecting of a building such as the Academy of Music should be, is a matter of official supervision. Plans are received up to a certain date, and thoroughly examined. They are then placed in the Institute for a month, where they receive the severest scrutiny from experts on all which relates to the subject, whose objections and suggestions are noted, and through this public criticism all the good points are evolved, the weak points exposed, and the judges guided to a right decision.

Some such system should be adopted here. The competition should be open, and the plans, when received, should be deposited in the

rooms of the American Institute, where they could be inspected by practical men, the value of whose opinions would be beyond dispute. Such a course would give confidence to the public, and we maintain that the public has an undoubted right to know all about the safety of a building which they will in the end have to pay for and use.

## ENGLISH OPERA—FRENCH THEATRE.

The second performance of the English Opera Company last Wednesday night, 30th inst., was attended by a large and brilliant audience. Eichberg's opera, which is very light and pleasant, grows upon the public ear; it is just of the quality to take the public taste. Wednesday night the music went smoother, and will doubtless improve as artists and orchestra work more together.

The artists are feeling more at home in their roles. Miss Richings is, of course, a thoroughly trained artist, and beside her the novices, Miss Harrison and Mrs. Mozart, do not show to advantage as actresses; still they are by no means awkward or restrained, although they have not the tact to enter thoroughly into the spirit of their parts. But their lady-like deportment, and very excellent singing, make them attractive aids to a very excellent performance.

Castle, Seguin and Penkes were good throughout, singing and acting capitally.

This opera has got the ear of the public, and it needs only certain things to retain its hold, and grow into a permanent success.

For years past every attempt to produce English opera has been a comparative failure—the failures would have been positive, but for the intervention of some one lady vocalist, whose talent and popularity sufficed to give them a brief vitality. All English opera enterprises have been got up on the cheap slipshod plan. Any chorus would do, any orchestra and any kind of scenery and appointments were good enough. The English operas were generally bold translations of the semi-modern Italian or French operas, with half the music omitted, rapid dialogues in place of the recitatives, and wretched singers in all but one or two of the principal roles. Then, too, there was no permanent home for the undertaking; its position was that of a vagrant, seeking lodgings for a night or two at such places as would take him in, so that the public, even if inclined, had no time to be reconciled to undertakings which were so unpromising in their beginnings, and had no time to improve.

The new enterprise at the Theatre Francais, commences, apparently, under very favorable auspices. It was planned and worked out by Mr. Henry Draper, who having great faith in its success if carefully managed, induced some gentlemen of capital to join him, to secure the New French Theatre, and to engage the best artists that could be procured in the city, in order to present operas in the highest language, in a style of excellence which should meet the requirements of the present exegiant state of

the public taste. Mr. Draper's task was laborious and ungracious, for, warned by the past, every one was doubtful of the success of the undertaking. Vexatious delays occurred in consequence of the failure to complete the new theatre at the time specified, which still further tended to discredit the enterprise. But all difficulties were at length overcome, the first performance was given, and was received with the warmest approval by a crowded and fashionable audience.

The company is well selected, the material is all good, possibly the very best that could be controlled at the time. Miss Richings is an experienced vocalist and actress, with undiminished powers. She has perfect stage command, and never allows the action to flag. Though not a perfectly trained singer, she has many of the graces of the art, singing with taste, piquancy and infinite dash and spirit. Miss Zelda Harrison, a novice in all respects, possesses the most telling stage requisites, a fine voice, a handsome face, youth and good appearance; she sings sweetly and expressively, and although she does not always use her low tones in the best taste, her whole manner is attractive, and will secure her in the popular favor. Both Miss Harrison and Mrs. Mozart are the merest tyros in acting and stage business, but neither of them betray awkwardness or embarrassment, only the least bit of stiffness, which will soon wear off.

The tenor, Mr. William Castle, has exhibited far more ability than we had hoped to find in him. He sings very charmingly, and throws a great deal of spirit and passion into his music. He also acts with spirit, and in a nonchalant easy manner which is effective, and only needs a little more grace and polish to deserve unrestricted praise. Mr. Seguin is not gifted with a very powerful voice, but what he has is of good quality, well under control, and he sings in a style to show the man of taste and the musician. He is a judicious actor, and interprets the part of the Doctor in good style. He also dresses and makes up well. Mr. Peakes, of Boston, has a good, sonorous voice, and sings the little he has to do well. He is a capital actor, and is a thorough master of the art of "making up."

With such material, it may well be imagined that the opera is well represented. Comparing it with any of its predecessors, the present, as a whole, is the best working company that we have had for years, and their efforts are thoroughly enjoyable, and are certainly proving highly attractive.

The plot of the opera is the same as that of the beautiful and very popular opera buffo, "Bon Soir Monsieur Pantalon," composed by Grisar, which every Parisian knows by heart. Mr. Julius Eichberg has wedded the translation to very pleasant appropriate music, which, without claiming anything on the score of originality, is ingenious in its construction and adaptation to the sentiment of the characters and the situations of the plot. The melodies are not so pronounced as they are familiar, and those which are the best remembered are embodied in the concerted music. The finale